

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Head teachers	26	11	37
Assistant teachers	1	10	11
Pupil-teachers	3	21	24
Sewing teachers	0	19	19
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			91

There is nothing of a marked character to distinguish the work of the schools during the year. On the whole, the teaching in the majority of the schools has been satisfactory. With respect to those that are stationary or retrogressing, the remedy appears to be in the securing of more capable teachers as soon as the Board is financially able to increase the salaries of teachers of small schools, and in a secondary degree by equalising the salaries of females to that of male teachers, as recommended by the Inspector.

SEWING.—Sewing is now taught in all the Board's schools, and the work of the schools is carefully examined annually by the Ladies' Sewing Committee, and the marks awarded according to merit. The report of this Committee on the annual examination has been distributed to the School Committees and the teachers concerned, and the valuable suggestions contained therein will, I have no doubt, be the cause of marked improvement in the quality of the sewing during the next year.

It is worthy of remark, in connection with the relative capacity of girls and boys to acquire elementary education, that this year the girls stand in the front rank. In Standards II., III., and VI. the highest number of marks have been obtained by girls; and in Standards I., IV., and V. girls tie with boys in obtaining the highest number of marks.

ATTENDANCE.—The attendance roll for the year shows only the small increase of twenty, being this year 2,415, and last year 2,395. The strict average, however, shows for this year 1,831, while last year it was only 1,597, showing an actual increase of attendance of 10 per cent.—that is, from 66 per cent. last year to 76 per cent. this year. The increased attendance would probably have been greater had it not been for the unusual degree of sickness with which some of the schools were visited during the year.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—The Board framed and adopted new scholarship regulations, to make better provision for winners of scholarships who live in the country, increasing the maximum age limit, and providing for senior and junior classes for competition. A difference of opinion, however, arose with the department with respect to the question whether the competition for scholarships should be confined to children actually attending Board schools. The Board is of opinion that the competition for scholarships should be open to all children of school age, but as the approval of the regulations had not been signified, the Board offered six scholarships for competition under the existing regulations. Only three of the competitors obtained the requisite number of marks to win a scholarship. The Board will again offer the scholarships for competition.

FINANCE.—In common with all departments of the public service, Education Boards were called on by Parliament to aid in the general scheme of retrenchment by reducing the cost of their administration. The capitation vote was reduced by 4s., and an equally estimated reduction was made by altering the basis of payment from the working to the strict average. This Board estimated its loss of revenue, as the probable result of this policy, to equal £800; and to enable the reduced revenue to meet the ordinary expenditure, steps were at once taken to make reductions where possible. The Board therefore adopted a new scale of payments to teachers, based on the strict average, by which salaries over £50 were reduced by 5 per cent. and 10 per cent. The bonus on certificates was also reduced, the salaries of staff officers, members' travelling allowance, and the capitation to School Committees. These reductions were estimated to save £700 per annum, and it was estimated that £100 would be received from an increased attendance, and thus enable the Board to meet the deficit. On an examination of the accounts at the end of the year it was found that the loss of revenue was not so large as was anticipated. The loss on the reduction of capitation was about £370—about the sum estimated—but the loss occasioned by the strict average computations was only half the estimate, or about £200. This was caused by the strict average attendance of this year almost equalling the working average of last year, although the roll attendance of both years is practically the same. Last year the roll attendance was 2,395, taking the mean of the four quarters, and this year it is 2,415, while the working average of last year was 1,853, and the strict average of this year 1,831. Last year the capitation receipts were £6,960, and this year, under the retrenchment policy, £6,368, showing a loss to the Board of £592. From this it will be seen that the payment by strict average has stimulated the attendance at the schools, and, if it has to some extent failed in producing the saving expected by Parliament, it has given ample compensation by its beneficial operation in producing a more regular attendance of children. The practical results of the retrenchment policy have not been unduly severe on teachers from a financial point of view. As compared with last year, the payment made by the Board to teachers has only averaged in the aggregate a reduction of 3 per cent. Taking a dispassionate view of the year's work, I am not aware that economy in administration has injuriously affected any school, or seriously curtailed the educational advantages which this district has hitherto enjoyed, except so far as it has affected the salaries of teachers. The only practical remedy I can suggest for the inequality of payments to teachers is for the department, regardless of educational districts, to apply the money now paid to teachers throughout the colony on a more uniform system, according to the grade and capacity of the teachers, and the relative importance of the schools in which they are employed.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—The Board's income for the year, including the building grant of £1,067, and the balance of £702 16s. in hand at the beginning of the year, has been £8,855 1s. 8d.; and the expenditure £8,052 13s. 4d.; leaving a credit balance of £802 8s. 4d. This balance is properly chargeable, with liabilities, to the amount of £491 for buildings. Thus the balance on the